

Trump's Budget Turns Back Clock on Justice

JUNE 13, 2017 | KISHA BIRD, WAYNE TALIAFERRO & DUY PHAM



Today, U.S. Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein testified on the [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2018 Budget Request for the U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ) before the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies.

Released on May 23, the Trump Administration's proposed budget for FY 2018 is an [assault](#) on the economic security, safety, and civil rights of low-income communities, immigrants, and people of color. The budget proposes tax cuts for the wealthy at the expense of significant cuts to the safety net and health care, along with youth, education, and job training programs. DOJ's specific budget request is dangerous and clearly doubles down on the president's [campaign promises and the administration's executive orders and policy positions](#).

The DOJ budget proposes \$1.6 billion to build a needless and costly border wall as well as additional resources to hire more enforcement agents and expand immigrant detention. In addition, the DOJ budget [redirects \\$888 million](#) to fund the Trump Administration's immigration enforcement and violent crime reduction priorities, which means wasteful spending on more law enforcement instead of community-based prevention, mentoring strategies, and reentry services. The move is even more damaging in the context of a host of counter-productive decisions by the administration—none of them based on the evidence—on [private prison outsourcing](#), [justice reforms](#), [local and state jurisdiction support](#), and reforms to [sentencing](#) and [prison education](#).

DOJ's [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP) discretionary funding would be cut by 29 percent or nearly \$538 million from FY 2017 Continuing Resolution (CR) funding levels of \$1.8 billion. The OJP is charged with *"providing leadership, resources and solutions for creating safe, just, and engaged communities,"* and its programs support partnerships at the federal, state, and local levels among governments and community- and faith-based organizations. In addition to overseeing Juvenile Justice Programs, OJP also administers resources for reentry services through the Second Chance Act and critical funding for state and local jurisdictions to implement evidenced-based programming such as indigent defense, prevention and education programs, community corrections and reentry programs, and drug treatment programs through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program. Instead of focusing on priorities that prevent justice involvement, creating opportunities for law enforcement and community partnerships, and supporting returning citizens, OJP's FY 2018 budget request focuses on combating violent crime, increasing law enforcement officer safety, and budget cuts that undermine the safety and civil rights of immigrants and communities of color. OJP's budget also proposes to create a new block grant program—Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)—by eliminating key programs and reducing others that are designed to foster prevention and innovation in law enforcement.

- JAG overall funding would be reduced by approximately 11 percent to \$332 million from the FY 2017 CR funding levels of \$375 million.
- The Second Chance Act program would be reduced by 30 percent to \$48 million from the FY 2017 CR level of \$67.9 million.
- Juvenile Justice Programs would be reduced by 15 percent or \$31 million below the FY 2017 CR level of \$269.6 million.
- The Youth Mentoring program would be reduced by nearly 35 percent or \$31.8 million below the FY 2017 CR level of \$89.8 million.

PSN is designed to assist communities and improve the capacity of law enforcement and criminal justice agencies to address “*gun violence, violent crime and gangs*,” but it would not explicitly direct law enforcement agencies to implement progressive and restorative practices. Shifting resources to block grants without intentionality and targeting will not result in positive outcomes for low-income people and those under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system. From experience we know key weaknesses of block grants include funding failing to keep up with the costs of services and population growth over time; and unresponsive and declining funding levels and resources in times of need.

Two examples of programs eliminated through the PSN block grant would be the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program and Community-Based Violence Prevention Initiative. Both programs support place-based strategies that combine law enforcement, community policing, prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood restoration and prevent youth violence through a variety of activities such as street-level outreach, conflict mediation, and the changing of community norms to reduce violence.

The damages from these cuts and policies in DOJ would be further compounded by drastic and harmful cuts to vital employment, education, and training services across other agencies that enable low-income youth and adults to improve their skills and succeed in the workforce, adding to the loss of opportunity that further propels inequality, racial discrimination, and the poverty criminalized by this administration.

The cuts proposed in the President’s budget would discourage prevention and diversion in favor of overly aggressive police tactics, endorse draconian and regressive punishment, reduce economic opportunity, reinforce inequality, and promote cyclical interactions with the justice system that overwhelmingly impact immigrants, as well as low-income African American and Latino communities.

TRUMP'S BUDGET UNDERMINES JUSTICE, THREATENS PROGRESS

UNDERMINES EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

\$9.2 billion (13.5%) CUT

- Eliminates 21st Century Learning Centers
- Eliminates Student Education Opportunity Grants
- Cuts \$95M (16%) from Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
- Cuts \$166M (15%) from Career and Technical Education
- Cuts \$3.9B from Pell Grants
- Cuts the budget of GEARUP by \$103.1M (32%)
- Cuts TRIO by \$90M (10%)
- Cuts Federal Work study by \$487.8M (49%)

LIMITS ECONOMIC MOBILITY

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR:

\$2.5 billion (21%) CUT

- Cuts \$1.1B (40%) from WIOA Title I
- Cuts \$237.5M (14%) from Job Corps
- Cuts \$10M (11%) from reentry employment grants
- Eliminates Women in Apprenticeship grants

UNDERCUTS PREVENTION AND REENTRY

DOJ's OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS discretionary funding:

\$538 million (29%) CUT

- Cuts \$19.9M (30%) from Second Chance Act program
- Cuts \$40.1M (15%) from Juvenile Justice Programs
- Reduces Youth Mentoring program by \$31.8 M (35%)

**Proposes
\$1.6B for border
wall construction
and enforcement
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outdated 'law and
order'-style
enforcement
priorities.**

WASTES MONEY

**TEARS FAMILIES
APART**

**EXACERBATES
POVERTY AND RACIAL
INEQUALITY**